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SYSTEMA AFRICANUM:
OR A
TREATISE,
Discovering the
Intrigues and Arbitrary Proceedings
OF THE
Guiney Company.

AND ALSO

How prejudicial they are to the *AMERICAN* Planters, the Woollen, and other *Englisb* Manufactures: To the visible Decay of *TRADE*, and consequently greatly Impairing the *ROYAL REVENUE*, which would be Infinitely Encreased, provided Merchants and Mariners were Encouraged, who can discover several Places not yet Known, or Traded unto, by the *African* Company.

TOGETHER

With a True Account of their FORTIFICATIONS.

*Humbly Submitted to Their MAJESTIES, and to the
Consideration of Both Houses of PARLIAMENT.
By WILLIAM WILKINSON Mariner.*

London, Printed in the Year M. DC. XC.

THE
EPISTLE
TO THE
READER.

THE following Treatise is written by a Person well Experienced in the Affairs of Africa, having, for many Years, frequented those Coasts, as well the Parts belonging to the English, as those which appertain to the Portuguese, French and Dutch. And observing that Matters are carried there to the Loss and Dishonour of the English Nation, and the Ruin of their Trade, I thought it my Duty to write something, wherein I might, in some measure, shew the Zeal I have for Their Majesties Advantage, the Honour of my Country, and the Good of all English Traders, by representing to the Ingenious Impartial Reader the great Absurdities of the Royal Company in the management of that Coast and Trade.

Together with the Abuses committed upon the Ships and Persons of their Fellow Subjects, whether considered as Traders upon that Coast upon particular Accompts, or as Servants trading for the Company. All which I offer as the first Essay of this kind, and I promise you, that if this meet with Encouragement and Acceptance, I shall be induced to write a second, wherein I doubt not but to give you all the satisfaction that can be expected from so ill a Theme, if it be possible to please a Man by reading over to him his Bills of Lading, after

TO THE READER.

he is convinced that both *SHIP* and *CARGO* are lost at Sea.

Neither do I write this to renew Mens Sorrows, but to caution all Persons, by shewing them the many Evils perpetrated by the Royal Company, as well against those of their Fellow Subjects, (whom they term Interlopers, and treat worse than Turks) as upon their own Servants, all which I have but modestly hinted on, hoping that this may be the last of this sort which I may have occasion to write.

If it please God of his Infinite Wisdom and Goodness to shew Favour to this Nation, by Inspiring the Minds and Hearts of our most worthy Patriots now Assembled in Parliament under our Gracious Sovereign Lord and Lady King *WILLIAM* and Queen *MARY*, to take off the Edge of this Charter, which, for several Years, hath proved not only a Curb, but a Scourge to this Nation, by ruining many good Families, and by augmenting the Numbers of the Fatherless and Widows.

And because those who build Houses, or write Books, lie exposed to the Censures of all Men, so I do not expect to escape, especially from such who design this small Treatise Labours to frustrate; and I must tell such that I did not design it to please them, neither do I care whether they like or dislike, because I should be loth to receive any Favours from persons under their Circumstances, but shall rejoice if this may give you Precaution, and all others who either now have, or for the future may have any Dealings with them, recommending to you the Pupil's Lesson,

Fœlix quem faciunt aliena Pericula cautum.

Thine in Sincerity for the Publick Good,

W. W.

SYSTEMA AFRICANUM:
OR A
TREATISE,
Discovering the INTRIGUES of the
Guiney Company.

IT being every true *English* Man's Concern, to endeavour, to the utmost of his power, the Honour and Welfare of his Country, and to stir up all good Men, in this Juncture of time, to put thereto their helping hand, by representing to the Parliament jointly and severally, the great Inconveniences which this Nation lieth under, by the many Violences committed upon their Fellow-Subjects in general upon the Coast of *Africa* by the Royal *African* Company. And because I am experienced in their Intrigues, and a Sufferer by their Arbitrary Proceedings, I will cast in my Mite with others who have laboured under the same Oppression, and drunk of the same Cup of Afflictions.

Which Company are so far from entertaining thoughts of making restitution of their former Rapin, that they are now upon urging the Parliament by Petition, to confirm to them their Charter, that by a National Consent they may continue their Violences, under the specious Pretences of great Advantages accruing to this Nation.

Yet I hope that August Assembly will be well informed of the weightiness of this matter, and consider the many Evils this Charter hath already brought, not only upon the Subjects which have been concerned upon that Coast either as Servants to the Company, or as Traders upon particular Accompt, but upon this Nation in general.

And first having monopolized all the Coast of *Africa* from *Sally* in *South Barbary* lying in the Latitude of 36 degrees, 40 min. North, to *Cape de Bona Esperanca*, in the Latitude of 35 m. 50 d. South, which, upon a strait Line, makes difference of Latitude 72 degrees, 30 minutes, being 4350 miles, without reckoning Promontories, Bays, Rivers and Creeks, which are the material things herein to be consider'd, which will amount to far more, as shall be more amply treated of in the Descriptions of the Forts and Dwelling-Houses belonging to the said Company: Which vast Tract of Coast is lockt up from none but the Subjects of *England*, but, in a manner, free to all Strangers, as *French*, *Dutch*, *Portugueses*, *Danes* and *Hamburghers*, who, to the great detriment of this Nation in several Respects, carry the greatest part of the Traffick to their respective Habitations, which might come directly for *England*, if this Inconveniency were removed.

And this is not all the Evil which we suffer by this Charter, but the Trade of the several Manufactures of the Growth

Growth of *England* is most wretchedly impaired, Lands undervalued, and laid as it were neglected. The Merchant inanced, the Artificer ruined, the Shipping and Navigation discouraged, the Poor distressed for want of Employment, the Trade decayed; and consequently that Branch of the Royal Revenue, whose Lustre depends upon the greatness of Trade, is visibly decayed.

Let us descend to Particulars, relating to the Actions of the Royal Company, and their Agents abroad in *Africa*, who, by vertue of this Charter, oppress their Fellow-Subjects, by taking their Ships, imprisoning and starving their Seamen, illegally condemning the said Ships and Goods without any Jury, and converting the said Ships and Goods to their own use.

To this, add the Injuries committed upon those persons which miserably fall under their power, as the breaking open their Chests, and rifling their Writings, concealing and hiding their Books of Accompts, to the end that such poor men may for ever be incapacitated of redressing the Disorders, or of making up their Accompts with their Employers here in *England*. If after such Cruelties they escape with their Lives to return home, which few do, by reason of the barbarous usage of their persons by the Agents of the Company aforesaid, who have often declared, *That they will shew more mercy to a TURK, than to an INTERLOPER*, as they term those of the King's Subjects which Trade upon the Coast of *Africa* without their Licence, which proves the undoing of many a good Subject, the loss of many good Seamen, and the ruin of many good Families in *England*, who were harassed with the hardships of Imprisonment, and want of Sustenance, which is ever accompany'd with Sickness.

To this, add the continual Upbraidings of the Agents, that at length, sinking under their Afflictions, are forced to take up in the Company's Service, to shun the Dangers which threaten them every way, that is, the want of present Subsistence, and the hardships of Imprisonment, whilst they refuse to serve the Royal Company.

And this is not all the Evil which is caused by the Rifling of Papers and Journals, and other Writings, but if duly considered, is an irreparable Injury to this Nation, by keeping from our knowledge the Description of that part of the World, which many Ingenious Men labour to do to perfection, along the Coast where they Trade, by describing with more exactness the Bays, Rivers, Channels, Creeks, and Sands, leading to the several places of Trade, which the Company seizing, and hiding from the Publick, may be said to put out the Eyes of the Nation, whilst they take the advantage thereof to their own private use, whilst other Nations Encourage such Persons to make most Nice Enquiry, and by this means have the benefit of the Traffick, and the honour of planting their Religion, Language, and Manners, amongst them, as it is at this Day all along the Coast of *Africa*, where to the Northward, from the Castle of *Arguin* in the Territories of the *Moors*, to the River of *Gambia*, they speak most *French* and *Dutch*; and along the Coast of *Sieraleana* they speak *Portuguese*; and Thousands, by the Industry of the *Romish* Priests, are Baptized into the Church of *Rome*, Triumphant in their Regeneration by Christian Names, which they receive gladly at their Baptism by the Ministry of the Priests aforesaid, who make it their business to come Twice in a Year from *Cutchoe*, in the River of *Santa Domingo*, both by Sea and Land to make new Converts in the Northern parts of *Africa*; and the like is performed by the *French* Clergy; so that whilst

whilst we by our Negligence, and Company Policy, not only lose these pretious Opportunities our selves, but destroy all the Fellow-Subjects who labours to retrieve them; so our Neighbours on the other hand, by their Diligence, make a double Advantage, who whilst the Factors mind the Commerce, their Priests and Clergy-Men are assuring themselves of the Hearts and Hands of the Inhabitants, who being generally good Geographers, and Astronomers, do by their opportunities gain such vast Experience in the true discovery of their Ports, that no thing can out-do them; and thus by ingratiating themselves with the Inhabitants, they carry away the greatest part of the Traffick of the Coast, and the Esteem of the People, and by this means the Traffick is left open to Strangers, it not lying in the Companies power to hinder any Nation from Trading on that Coast, by reason of the slenderness of their Forts and Shipping.

Whereas if a Free Trade were granted to the Subject, it would raise a desire in great Undertakers, and Money'd Men, to prepare considerable quantities of Goods, and build many Ships, which by consequence would encourage the Ingenious Artizans to make up store of Manufactures of all sorts, and many Thousands of Poor would be employed, which at present want Bread; and Men of design would be every where seeking to improve their Talent. And first of all, as to the Manufactures of the Growth and Product of *England*, as Cloth, Bays, Says, Perpets, Serges, Bridwaters, Iron, Brass, Copper, Tin, Lead, Glasse, Felts, Shoes, *English* Spirits, Knives, and infinite others, would be Daily Exporting, to the great Encouragement of all Men; for by this means Lands would bear a better Price, yea, more Rent, and each Man's Industry would be upon the stretch to outdo his Fellow; and instead of 100000 £. worth of Goods, which are now Exported in a Year, we should

should have Four times the Quantity Exported, which, without all peradventure, would infinitely Increase, according to the Encouragement given.

And I hope that the Persons concerned in these several Manufactures, and whose particular Grievance and Concern this is, will not be wanting to make their Addresses to their Majesties, and this present Parliament, for a Redress of these Abuses, they being sensibly wronged hereby, and particularly the Serge-Workers, who by these proceedings are debarred the Vent of their Manufactures, the Subject not daring to Buy, being debarred of the privilege of Transporting the said Commodities to that part of the World which Expends most, that is, to the Coast of *Africa*; and by this means the Publick Vent of Serges is in a manner lost, and the Sale limited by the Royal Company, who are but one joint Stock, and by this means screw up the Tradesmen to a limited Quantity and Price, Length, Breadth and Weight, and allowing but just what they please for them, which many Poor Persons are obliged to take, though not capable of maintaining the Workmen, yet for the Causes aforesaid, are by their present want of Money obliged to take what they can get, to the great disheartning of such Undertakers, and the utter Ruin of that once flourishing Trade.

And the same Measures are to be taken by those whose Trade consists in the Manufactures of Iron, Tin, Copper, &c. whose Interests it is to promote the Publick Exportation of those Commodities, being of the Growth and Manufacture of this Land, and do lie under the same Circumstances as the Serge-Workers do, they being none of the least of those Members of that Splendid Body, which makes *England* famous for its Corporations, to which so many Mighty Kings have been graciously pleased to grant
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Charters, Endowing them with many Privileges, which still shew the Respect which Men in former Ages have had for those Politick Bodies, and who now ought not to slight the means of their own Preservation, by labouring to free themselves from this Yoke, which is destructive to them, as a Raging Fever is to a Natural Body, since the old Proverb says,

*Self Preservation is in every Creature
Esteemed a Sacred Policy in Nature.*

Let us now look toward *Africa*, and take a View of the Riches of that place which is undiscovered to the Merchant, and particularly, the boundless Woods of *Cam*, which is a Red Wood fit for Dying, the prodigious quantities of dry Hides of all sorts, of Wild and Tame Cattle, useful in the making of Shoes, Boots, Trunks, Saddles, and Furniture, &c. the inexhaustible Treasure of Gold, the vast quantities of Elephants Teeth, Bees-Wax and Honey, and the inestimable Riches of Gums, Ostriches-Feathers, and Amber-Grease, which Commodities are all Purchased for the Goods of the Growth and Manufacture of *England*, and are brought directly home, which is a double Advantage, as well to the Kingdom, as to the Royal Revenue.

Or, If we consider the Trade of *Negro* Servants, which proves so Advantageous to the Western Plantations in the several Islands of *America*, as well as that Continent whose chief Commerce is Sugar, Tobacco, Indico, Ginger, Cotton, and Dying Stuffs, which are the Natural Product of this New World, whose Penury or Plenty lies indispensably upon the Trade of *Negro* Servants from *Africa*, which the Royal Company manage with more than an ordinary Slight for their own Advantage, taking Care that the Planters shall never be furnished with *Negroes* sufficient to follow

low their Business with satisfaction, and Imposing what Prizes they please, and do Trust but Six Months; for which they exact such an Interest, that they in a manner sweep away the profit of their Labours; so that altho' the Planter's Industry be never so great, yet he shall not be able to effect his Designs, because his Hands are thus bound by the Company; yet I am sure that if the Planters were furnished with *Negroes* from *Africa*, Answerable to their Industry, that Four times the Sugar, Indico, Cottons, &c. would be Imported every Year; then let every Rational Man judge, If this would not be infinitely more Advantageous to the Kingdom in general.

And to such a height is the Pride of this Company grown, that they presume not only to Oppress the Subject abroad, but likewise to Lord it over them here in *England*, by Imposing 40 per Cent. upon such as with their Licence Trade to *Africa*, as *Samuel Shering*, and others, now in *London*, can Witness, who paid them the Value aforesaid, for a Permission to Trade at *Anzola*, a Place in *Africa*, and remote from any of their Castles and Factories, and in the *Portuguese* Territories, which is both hurtful to Traffick, and prejudicial to the King's Prerogative and Revenue, it being a point of Religion to pay Tribute to *Cesar*; but I never heard of any Law, or Gospel, to oblige Men to pay Tribute to the *African* Company.

And to this, add the Rigorous Proceedings with Poor Men who serve them in their Voyages to *Africa*, by Multing them for small inconsiderable matters brought by them from *Guiny*, altho' bought with their own private Stocks, and either making them pay the full Value of such Goods in *England*, or detaining the said Goods for their own use, as Hundreds of Poor Seamen can Attest, which brings to mind that Old and True Proverb,

*Many Commanders never Good did bring,
Let one be Lord, in Joye's Name one be King.*

Aut Cæsar, aut Nihil.

I could dwell longer upon this Subject, but that I am partly sensible that those Men whose particular Concern this is, will represent in due time in its true Form.

I will now give you an Account of the Places which the Royal Company have not, as well as what they pretend to have, along the Coast of *Africa*, their Patent allowing them from *Sally* in *South-Barbary*, to *Cape de Bona Esperança*; and now let us see if they Occupy this Coast.

And we shall find by Experience, that from *Sally* all along the *Moors* Coast, that they have not the least Commerce until they come into the River of *Gambia*, where they have a Castle of about Twenty Six Guns, and in Factors and Soldiers sometimes Thirty Men, and often lesser; and upon Enquiry we shall find the *French* have taken Possession of all that Coast, having a Castle at *Arguin*, in the Territories of the *Moors*, where they Lade Two Ships Yearly with a Thousand Tun of Gum-Arabick, and many Chests of sumptuous Plumes of Ostrich-Feathers, and White Herrons, of great Value, and much Amber-Greace.

The next Post is that of *St. Louis*, in the Mouth of *Senega*, where the *French* Trade for One Thousand Negroes Yearly, much Teeth, Feathers, and Gold, without the Company daring to peep into that River.

The Third Fort of the *French*, is that of *Gorey*, in the South of the Promontory called *Cape de Verd*, on the *Bour-*
C *bofin*,

basin, and *Jelloff-Coast*, where they Trade along that shoar, even above the *English* Fort in the River of *Gambia*, and in despite of the said Fort have Planted a Factory at a Place called *Grege*, in the Kingdom of *Sangrigoe*, where they Trade rather more than the *English* do, for Teeth, Wax, Gold, Slaves, and Hides, the *English* not daring to gain-say them.

~~Since the Year 1713~~ the *French* have settled another great Factory in the Kingdom of *Barron*, within shot of the *English* Guns, and do Trade Daily ashoar, and aboard, in the very Town of *Gillefree* jointly, and in presence of the *English*, without resistance, who come with their Merchant Ships to an Anchor before their House at *Abadare*, without saluting the Union Flag on the *English* Fort. The space of the Coast thus seized by the *French* being One Thousand Three Hundred Miles.

Neither is this all the Disgrace, but, in the Year 1681, *Anderfon* the Pirat went into the River of *Gambia* in a small Pink of Seven or Eight Iron Guns, and came to an Anchor there, which put the Government into such a Consternation, that they durst not refuse his Visit in the Royal Fort, where the said Pirat fitted himself with Necessaries for the carrying on of his Piracies, where he disposed of much Riches which he had Plundered of the Islands of the *Cape de Verd*, where after he had received intelligence of a *French* Ship Trading to Leeward in the River of *Santo Domingo*, he went and took her, and with her returned to *Gambia* to the Companies Agent, *Alexander Cleeve*, to whom he gave the Old Pink, and some Rigging, (you may judg for what,) wherewith he committed so many Outrages upon the Habitations and Ships of such as he could overpower, and at his leisure went his way, to the everlasting Discredit of the Union Flag, which hung up-
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on the Fort, Blushing to be made the Patron of the Mortal Enemy of Mankind, and Vermin of the Sea,

The said *Anderson* Cruising along the Leeward Coast met the *Henry* and *William* of *London*, whom he used as he pleased, and discoursed with the Commander *William Wilkinson*, Son of Captain *Henry Wilkinson*, concerning his Reception in *Gambia*, as the said Commander, now in *London*, and several others, can Attest.

Thus you may see that the *French* and Pirats put what Compliment they please upon the Royal Companies Forts ; let us now shew you in what Credit the Fort of *Gambia* is with the Inhabitants the *Negroes* of *Gambia*.

It hapned that in the time of the late Agent, *Alexander Cleeve*, the Crown of the Kingdom of *Barrow* was in dispute by Two of the Nobility, when the said Agent intermeddling, gave Succors to *Gennow Sunco*, whose Right to the Crown I will not dispute, and soon settled him in the Throne ; but after a little time, being puffed up with Successes, the said Agent let slip some opprobrious Language, complaining that the King did not keep his Word, which Discourse being carried to the King's Ear, he arose from his place to come and Commune with the said Agent concerning this matter, and coming to the Town of *Jillefree*, sent the Agent word that he was coming to speak with him, but the Agent returned Answer by the Alcade, *That if the King would speak with him, he should make haste, for he would depart with the next High-Water.* At which time the King said, *I will go, since my Master Commands ;* and so went to the Agent's Pallisadoes, and there sat down at the foot of a great Tree to wait his Master *Cleeve's* approach, who was no sooner come into the King's Presence, but with a great deal of Impudence said, *How now Old GENNOW, how is it ?*

But one of the Grantees, by Name *Sambalama*, Taught him better Manners, by reaching him a Box on the Ear which beat off his Hat, and a few Thumps on the Back, and seizing him, disarmed him, together with the rest of his Attendance, amongst which was *Benedict Stafford* Commander of the *Margaret*, now in *London*, (who made his escape, and fled like a Lusty Fellow to his Ship,) and *William Bramble* Commander of the *Coaster*, now in *London*, and several others, who together with the Agent were taken, and put in the King of *Barrow*'s Pound, and stayed there Three or Four Days until their Ransom was brought, Value Five Hundred Bars, which at Six Shillings *per* Bar, amounts to a Hundred and Fifty Pound, and then they were released, and swallowing the Affront, sat himself down content, not knowing how to help it, altho' this Town lies within shot of the Guns of the Fort. Pardon this Digression, which only serves for Diversion.

We will now speak of the Forts and Dwelling-places which the Royal Company pretend to have on the Coast of *Africa*, and I will begin with that of *James Island* in the River of *Gambia*, which is the first Fort they have on the Coast of *Africa*. The Walls about 12 Foot high, having 4 Flankers to the 4 Winds, whereof those to the North and West are kept in good order, having 6 Guns apiece mounted; the other two seldom in order, and between Factors and Soldiers 40 men.

They have likewise two Platforms of 6 Guns apiece lately repaired, but unfit for service, there being no shelter for those men which play those Guns, they being exposed to the Enemy.

Fresh Provisions, Wood or Water they have none, but what is daily brought from the Continent, which the Negroes hinder them when they please ; so that this is all the Fortification or Footing which the Company have in all this Tract of Coast from *Sally* to *Gambia*, by Computation 1200 miles.

From *Gambia* to *Siera Leona*, is about 360 miles, where they have a sorry House, with 12 men, and sometimes not eight ; and 14 or 16 Guns laid without any manner of Art, but open to the Enemy.

From *Siera Leona* to *Sherbro*, is about 36 miles, where they have a small House without any Guns, and 4 or 5 men.

From *Sherbro* till you come to *Succunde*, they have not the least Footing, which is about 740 miles.

At *Succunde* they have a small House of Thatch with 2 men, and no Guns.

From *Succunde* to *Comendo*, is 18 miles ; they have there a Thatcht Hovil with 3 men, and no Guns.

From *Comendo* to *Cape Coars*, is 20 miles, where they have a Castle, with about 40 Guns mounted, and about 100 Soldiers: But the *English* have not had it above 25 years, for it was taken from the *Dutch* by *Sir Robert Holmes*. The *Dutch* lost this Fort for want of men to defend it, having lost their men by Sicknes, and the Mortality which hapned amongst them that year. But chiefly by the help of the *Danes*, and the *Natives*, under whose protection the *English* landed

landed their Guns and men, which caused the Surrender of that place : But Admiral *Stroaks* the foregoing Year having been before it, and the Natives at that time not inclined to favour the *English*, they returned *Re Infecta*. By which it appears, that the Natives are the best Bulwark to defend any Hold the *English* have upon those Coasts ; and for want of the Natives good will, *Cormanteen* Castle was taken by the *Dutch* in the Year 1664, and they have it in possession to this day.

From *Cape Coars* to *Anamabo* , where they have lately built a small Fort of 6 or 8 Guns, and 10 or 12 men, and is from *Cape Coars* 12 miles.

From *Anamabo* to *Agah*, where they have a small Fort with 6 or 8 men, and is about one mile distant.

From *Agah* to *Acra*, where they have a small Fort with 16 Guns, and about 20 men ; the *Dutch* having a better Fort, and more Guns in the same Town, and within Musquet Shot ; and as well here, as all the Coast along, can command the *English* Force. And 'tis manifest the *English* Security is founded in the Interest they have with the Natives, who will not suffer the *Dutch* to interrupt them, their Policy teaching them to invite all Nations to come and Trade freely with them, causing such as have any Forts or Factories amongst them, to keep at peace one with another. The *Danies* preservation is a good Instance of this, whose Castle may at any time be taken by the *Dutch* from Castle *de Mina*, but the Natives will not suffer it to be done, these places being distant about 70 miles.

From *Acra* to *Papa*, and so to *Ardeb*, where they have a thatch'd House, and 2 white Men, is about 200 miles.

From *Ardah* to *Binin* is about 120 miles, where they have a thatcht House, and about 5 men.

From *Binin* to the furthest part that they have any Trade to, but no Footing House or Castle, being the Rivers of *Congo* and *Leongo*, and is about 900 miles.

And so to *Angola*, a *Portuguese* City, and all the Coast as far as *Cape Bona Esperanca*, which they have included in their Patent, not having Fort or House, or any Footing or Trade, being 1600 miles.

Thus you see how the vast rich Coast of *Africa* is managed by the Royal Company, who, in effect, do not occupy 300 Leagues themselves, and, at best, do but go halfs with the *French* in that which they seem to have. And this is evident enough, for notwithstanding their Fort of *Gambia*, the *French* not only Trade in that River, but likewise hinder the Company from Trading in the River's Mouth, witness *James Jobson* now in *London*, who was sent by Agent *John Costle* in the year 1680, or 81, to trade with the Companies Sloop with a Cargo fitted for the Coast of *Jually*, and *Potudaly*, was taken by a *French* Ship of 10 or 12 Guns, and carried up to *Gorey*, and there detained Prisoner for the space of 42 days or more, it not being in the power of the *English* to demand their Liberty, to the discredit of the Nation, and ruin of Trade.

Again, *Beneditt Stafford*, the following Year, being by the same Agent commanded to go and trade upon the Coast aforesaid, (at *Potudaly*, which is the River's Mouth of *Gambia*) was taken by the *French*, and carried up to *Gorey*, and detained during their Agent's pleasure.

Again,

Again, in the Year 1682. a Sloop, commanded by *Samuel Lee*, called the *Mary*, was sent to Trade by the Companies Agent *A. C.* which the *French* having Notice of, went in search of the said Sloop, and having found her in the River of *Geba*, set upon her with their Long-boat only, and a few small Arms.

In the Conflict the Commander was shot in the Shoulder, and in the Belly, and one or two of the men killed, and the Surgeon and some others taken and carried aboard the *French Ship*, Monsieur *la Fonte* Commander, together with the Sloop aforesaid.

Some of the Seamen and the Factor fled overboard into the *Mangroves*, and made their Escape to the *Negroes*, who Robbed them of what they brought ashore with them, and bound the Slaves, letting the Freemen depart, to carry to *Gambia* the direful News of their Defeat.

In Fine, the *French* have so pestred those *Northern* parts, that the *English* are in continual apprehensions of losing their Royal Fort of *Gambia*, and not without some reason; for the *French* are always better provided of Men, Ammunition and Arms than they are, and not able to make any considerable Resistance, did they not depend on the friendship and assistance of the *Negroes*.

By this time I hope the Parliament will be undeceived by the Pretences wherewith the Royal Company endeavour to Lull the Nation asleep, by suggesting strange things of their Force in *Africa*.

Let us now speak something of the great Charge which they pretend they are at in keeping their Forts, and herein you shall see with what Injustice the Royal Company Acts towards their own Servants, and this is worth your Observation.

It is generally believed, that the Royal Company do allow to every Soldier Twenty Shillings, and to every Seaman Twenty Seven, or Twenty Eight Shillings, which is a most notorious Untruth, for altho' they promise as aforesaid, yet it is most certain that the Wages paid Men in *Africa* will not amount to above Five Shillings and Nine Pence, or Six Shillings at most, for Twenty Shillings sterling, *Pro rato*, that is, according to the Prizes of Goods between *LONDON* and *GUTNET*, *viz.*

L O N D O N.

One Blew Shirt Value Two Shillings and Eight Pence.

One Pair of Shoes Value Two Shillings and Nine Pence.

One Quart of *English* Spirits Value Four Pence.

Which in all comes to Five Shillings and Nine Pence.

A F R I C A.

One Blew Shirt Value Nine Shillings.

One Pair of Shoes Value Nine Shillings:

One Quart of *English* Spirits Value Two Shillings.

Which in all comes to Twenty Shillings.

Now let any Rational Man judg what Expences the Company are at to keep Seven Houses and Four Forts with less than Two Hundred Men, which they pay off at lesser Rates than the Bankrupts in *London* Compound with their Creditors, and what security they can propose in this their Weakness from so powerful a Rival as their Neighbours the *French* are ; to say nothing of the *Dutch*, *Portugueses*, and other Nations, which go snacks with them for the Trade of those parts ; and what pity it is that a Coast of about Five Thousand Three Hundred Miles should be thus slighted and kept under by the Company, who are not able to manage one Quarter thereof themselves, it being impossible to furnish that Trade with so limited a Stock as One Hundred Thousand Pound sterling *per Annum*, when as if the matter were regulated, as is done by the *Turkey* Company, the Trade of *Africa* would consume Six times the quantity of Goods.

And this is for to warn all Seamen and Soldiers for the future, to be wary how they suffer themselves to be thus Chouz'd by the Royal Company, by going to Serve them in *Africa*, who before they admit any Person into that Service, Impose on them an Oath, which is in no wise lawful, nor reasonable, but serves only for a Snare to such as take it, for that no Man yet ever kept it Inviolated.

To this add the many Casualties which befall Men on that Coast, caus'd by the violent Heats occasion'd by the near Neighbourhood of the Sun, whose greatest Declination is Twenty Three Degrees, Thirty Minutes, either to the Northward, or Southward, of the Equinoctial ; the Pestilent Air of that Incultivated and Woody Continent, the heavy Rains, and the Vexatious Troops of restless Muskitoes

kitoes which at every Sting draw Blood , and devour Men Alive.

And that which is worfe, the bad Usage of the Companies Agents, the continual Drinking of Water, with the lack of Bread, which is the Staff of Life. In fine, a continual Scene of Miseries of all sorts, that a Man must be both Senseless and void of Understanding, that will refuse an Employ at home in the Service of his King and Country, where, whilst he liveth, he enjoyeth the freedom of his Mind and Conscience, the Fellowship of his Friends and Relations.

And if he Dieth, he shall be sure to obtain Immortal Honour, and Eternize his Name, by Sacrificing his Life and Fortune to the Service of his King, his Country, and his Religion ; whereas if he goes to Serve the Royal Company in *Africa*, (from whence not one of Ten returneth,) he shall Perish miserably in the Land of *Negro* Infidels, without so much as Christian Burial for their Dead Corps, or their remaining Substance secured for their surviving Friends.

It may be Objected by the Curious,

That it is of dangerous Consequence to go to Africa in any wise, and that these Dangers and Inconveniencies are not to be Remedied.

To which I Answer,

That what has been said here, is in relation to the Companies Service, and the Hardship Impos'd upon Men by the insatiable Avarice of the Company, and their Agents.

But as for those who Ship themselves on Merchant-ships which Trade upon that Coast upon particular account, have such Provision made by the Industrious Commanders, that nothing is wanting to them, and instead of Drinking Water, they have either Beer, or Punch, and that at such reasonable Rates, that all Men may allow themselves that which is Necessary, and instead of Boiled Corn, Provision is made of good Bread.

To this add the Brotherly Care which such Men have of their Seamen's safety for the good of the Voyage, for that the loss of the Men is the overthrow of the Voyage; and withal, the Air at Sea is far more Healthy than that of the Fenny and Moorish Grounds ashore, and many more Advantages are found in the Service of private Traders, than that of the Company, for the Reasons aforesaid.

I am unwilling to trouble you with any particulars of the Baseness of the Companies Agents in their Dealings, and therefore I shall not insist thereon in this Treatise, but shall represent unto you the strange oversight whereof the Royal Company are indispensibly culpable in their remissness in the great concern of the Souls of such who reside in their Forts, and in *Africa*.

It is Observable that the *Negroes* have their *Bicherins*, or Priests, distinguished by the Names of
** Dignity of Fodeh and Moreh, the * Fodeh, or High-
 a Bishop. Priests, have the respect of all Men, being
 Admired for their Sobriety and Goodness
 of Life; the other sort, called Moreh, are inferiour
 Priests who have not arrived to that Austerity and Mor-
 tification*

tification which the former have done, and these go about the several Kingdoms Instructing Youth, and Praying with the People, and Healing the Sick, some by vertue of Simples, and others by Charms and Fetishes.

They Pray Five times in the Natural Day, and Wash as often.

They Address themselves for the most part to the great Prophet *Mahomet*, with their Faces turned toward the Holy House at *Mecca*.

They Kill Sacrifices to some unknown and invifible Diety, whom they call in their Tongue *Dien*, and sometimes *Alla*, and are very Devout in their way, abstaining from Wine and Hogs-flesh.

The *Portugueses* and *French* have their Priests and Almoners in most of their Forts and Factories, which often go about to Preach and Pray to those of their Religion.

But for the space of Twelve or Fourteen Years practice which I have had upon the *English* Coast, I never saw an *English* Minister there, except two, one at *Cape Coast*, and one at *Acra*, which gives great occasion of Scandal, not only to the *Gentiles* and old *Heathens*, but to the few *Christians* which reside there, who call the *English* *CAFRE*, which is to say, *MEN WHICH KNOW NOT GOD*.

The *Portuguese* term them *DESALMADAS ENGLISHES*, which is to say, *SOUL-LESS ENGLISH*.

Which

Which Discourse is occasioned by the small shew of RELIGION, and the little Respect which those *English* there have for the Clergy.

And indeed 'tis dreadful, to see in most of their Castles and Houses dying Men, for want of a spiritual Guide, lie swearing and damning out their last Breath, and, perhaps, their Fellow Mortals drinking and swearing, as it often hapneth in their respiring preience.

Undoubtedly the Royal Company cannot be ignorant of this Defect ; but because I have been some time conversant with the Companies Agents and Servants in those Parts, I can the better tell you the Reason of this Neglect :

And first of all as to the Royal Company, who are unwilling to allow their Forts and Ships five or six Faithful Ministers of the Church and Gospel of Christ, a small Pension of Eighty, or One hundred pounds *per Annum* each, to go and seek to reform and conform those poor Souls to the forsaken true way of Holiness and Righteousness, and by the way to labour the Conversion of the poor Heathen, *so bring them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.*

Moreover, their Agents are sensible, That if Men of holy Life, and sound Doctrin should reside amongst them, that such good Men would take notice of their now uncontroll'd Actions, and would be able to inform their Betters of their Arbitrary Proceedings.

And

And that you may not be altogether a Stranger to the *Genius* of those Agents, I will relate (tho' contrary to promise) what I heard an Agent of *Gambia* say in the Year 1681, who was solicited by the Factors and Masters of Ships, Resident there to the Royal Company, for a Clergyman, that they might have the benefit of his good Conversation.

The said Agent answered :

Dam 'em, I hate the fulsom Company of those impertinent Fellows, who, perhaps, are in effect, no better than Butchers or Taylors Sons, yet value themselves upon their Habit and Order, that they expect the whole Respect of the Fort should be paid to their Persons.

And besides, I love my Liberty to be merry with whom and when I will, which I cannot have, where these Insipid Fellows are.

Thus you see what Credit RELIGION hath in those Parts, even with those who by their Place and Authority ought to countenance and encourage it in their Government, they themselves proving the chief Despisers of it ; And then no Wonder if all Men under their Government let loose the Reins to all sorts of Vice and Debauchery, since the old Proverb says,

Regis ad Exemplum totus componitur Orbis—

But

But I call to mind my Promise, not to trouble you with the Extravagancies of the Companies Agents, in reference to

Their Exorbitancies in all manner of Uncleanness.

Their Exactions on poor Seamen and Soldiers.

Their false Weights and Measures.

Their Sophistications of the Companies Goods, and over-rating of them.

Their Intercepting of Letters.

Their Concealing of dead Mens Remains, and hiding their Books.

For which, I hope to hear some Tryals in Guildhall ere long, together with a few of the Companies Exploits acted upon their Fellow-Subjects by the King's Ships, at the Cost of the whole Nation, which, for the Future, I hope will see their Mony better disposed of, than to arm Men of War to ruin themselves, as may appear by the List of Men of War lent the Royal Company in the two last Reigns (as may be seen in the Court of Admiralty) to the Coast of Guiney and Barbadoes, and of the barbarous Usage shewed to their Fellow Subjects when taken by them, and the loss of their Friends and Relations, all which I shall in my next amply Treat of.

It now remains that I speak a Word or Two, by way of Advertisement, to such Persons whose Unhappy Stars drive them to such Despair, that they voluntarily put themselves into the Jaws of Death, thinking to get Life, or think to grow Rich by Banishing themselves from the Fountain of Riches.

From the Society of CHRISTIANS, to that of HEATHENS.

From that of MEN, to that of BRUTES, nay worse than Brutes.

Since Brutes follow Instinct of Nature, but Perverse Man will not follow the Dictates of Reason, how Advantageous soever to him, or Excellent in it self.

Consider I pray what has been said in this short Treatise, wherein the Truth hath been said without Prejudice, only designing to serve his Country.

And withal to shew the World how far the Royal Company are from being what they pretend to be.

What Inconveniencies they by their Charter bring upon this Nation.

What Opportunities and Advantages they give the French, and other Nations, to our own Ruin.

In Reference to our Manufactures, Navigation, loss of Soldiers and Seamen, Ruining of Traders which Trade to the Coast of *Africa*, and *West-Indies*, the Impairing of the Royal

Royal Revenue, the Discredit of our Nation, and the Scandal of our Protestant Religion, to the great Dishonour of God, and Sorrow of all good Men, which if they continue to be a Company, in all likelihood, will grow worse.

But as I have laid this Foundation, in representing these Disorders, I hope God of his Mercy will favour this Nation, by putting into the Hearts of our Gracious King *W^m. II.* and Queen *Mary*, together with the present Parliament now Assembled, like another *St. George*, to Defeat this *African Monster*, or like another *Alexander*, to Cut in pieces with his Victorious Sword this Enchanted Gordian-Knot, for the good of these Nations.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 3. Line the 3d, for *Inhanced*, read *Reduced*. Page 13. Line 21. for 10 Guns, read 40.

